

FISH BUSINESS OF SAN FRANCISCO

Peculiar Conditions Under Which Two Syndicates Control It.

Unfair Tactics Against Which Anti-Trust Work Has Commenced.

When a San Franciscan sits down these days to a plate of fish and potatoes, he pays as much as he used to "before the fire" for porterhouse and mushrooms. Of course it isn't that bad, but seems so in retrospect, such has been the recent increase in the cost of these commonest of foods with its reactive effect on that sensitive register, the household account book, says Herbert Thompson in the Boston Transcript.

The San Franciscan by force of habit tries to hinge every change in living conditions during the past four years on the "April disaster," which certainly did upset the existing order. But if he had the time to study the newspapers of other parts of the country, in particular those east of the Rockies, he would find ours is not the only city to suffer from artificial trade conditions.

But a change is coming. And it begins right with the fish. California has a new anti-trust law, modelled on that of Ohio, and through it San Francisco is looking for relief. Already the fish trust has been indicted to the extent of 20 men. The vegetable trust is sure to follow. Then, after the trial of these cases, District Attorney Pickert intends to carry his new style of graft prosecution against the meat and other illegal and oppressive monopolies.

The prosecutions now begun will touch everything except the potato trust. This particular monopoly is a Japanese enterprise, controlled by George Shima. To go after the potato trust would be to tread on the supersensitive toes of Japan, and we don't want the rest of the country on our necks for starting a war. Then, again, we are just as timid about raising a diplomatic rumpus, for we cut here believe that the less Mr. Knox tries to match wits with Tokio, the better for Uncle Sam. Hence our solicitude about starting anything.

The case of George Shima and his honorable potatoes, which he cornered and let loose at \$2.50 a sack—we used to pay 75 cents—we gingerly pass by. He is worth that much to us as proof that our little yellow brothers have still a chance or two left in California.

The fish trust is controlled almost exclusively by Italians, and the vegetable trust entirely so. They hold these monopolies against all comers. Greeks have cut heavily into the peanut, banana and bootblack businesses, just as the Hindus have got the tamale output away from the Mexicans. But Greeks and Hindus have neither the strength nor courage to buck through whitecaps and lie out in fogs. This work takes men. Yet, as will be shown, its rewards go not to the Italian fishers, but to the mafia-like trust.

How the Fish Comes to Frisco.

San Francisco is bounded on one side by ocean and two sides by bay. The principal ocean fish caught outside the heads are soles and sand dabs, which live in the depths along the sand. The bay gives up rock cod, smelt and flounders in the main, while up in the arm where the Sacramento River washes in are salmon and striped bass. The principal fish imported from outside ports are halibut from Seattle and barracuda from San Diego. As to the rest, San Francisco supplies not only itself, but the inland cities as far east as Denver.

Investigation shows that bay fish have become scarcer of late years. This is attributed to the illegal use by the Chinese shrimp fishers of fine meshed nets, and to the dumping of crude petroleum on the waters by oil burning ships and factories, an act also prohibited by statute. Shrimp fishing by the way, is the only branch the Chinese have been able to hold against Italian aggression. Their nets kill the

young fish directly, while the oil scum heavy with asphalt, floats into coves and poisons the spawn. It is the oil that has caused crabs, once plentiful, to be so scarce that they are now largely imported from the small bays up the coast.

Ocean fishing, which requires a somewhat expensive equipment, is monopolized by the two concerns that founded the trust, namely A. Paladini & Co. and the Western Fish Company. Each company has a set of two tugs for it takes two tugs to haul the seine. The Western and Paladini are therefore the only people from whom the other dealers can get the most popular fish in the market—sand dabs and soles. To deny a wholesaler or retailer sand dabs and soles would be much like the meat trust refusing lamb and veal to a butcher who could buy beef and pork on the outside. Through this peculiar monopoly the other small wholesalers were forced into the trust and the independents out of business.

Although the Monopoly of Deep Sea Fishing

is the most important fact about the trust from the district attorney's point of view, it is not its most picturesque aspect. With fishermen's wharf and the glue works, the plot begins to thicken. It is at fishermen's wharf the bay fishers come in with their sharp ended boats, lateen rigged and painted bright blue. Here the scene is like a bit of the Mediterranean. The men wear sashes about the waist and rakish yarn caps and jabber all manner of dialects as they throw out their catches or gather in groups to gossip and mend nets. Their isolation and ignorance formed a serious obstacle during an

early stage of the inquiry in getting evidence as to the bulldozing of the men and the rakeoff of the trust.

Fishermen's wharf is on the northernmost edge of San Francisco, while the glue works is miles to the south in the section given over to slaughter houses, tanneries and other vile smelling trades. Trucks loaded with fresh fish, which the trust could not sell without lowering its established prices, used to rumble from the wholesale markets daily to the glue works. The drivers would stop at wayside saloons and trade off a mess of fish for a schooner of steam beer. The hospitals and asylums of the poor could not afford fish, unless perhaps some cheap kind on Fridays, but tons were sent daily by the trust to its adjunct, the glue works.

How these different phases of the trust's affairs are joined in a single legal case is best shown in a general review of the local fishing business.

Forming a Monopoly on Top of Camerlato.

In the development of the fish business before the fire two big concerns were built up, the Paladini, an Italian concern, who handled the local business, and the Western, originally started by Germans and managed by a German, Weissich. This did almost wholly a shipping business.

On April 18, 1906, all markets were wiped out by fire. Commerce was in chaos. But out of this confusion came a mania for combining against the helpless people. Weissich saw his opportunity, and in the following August enlarged the Western's capital stock to \$250,000 and reduced the number of directors. The smaller shareholders were bought out and 10 rival wholesale firms absorbed. This left Paladini and the Western as the two powerful firms in trade, with a monopoly of deep sea fish. There remained out only six smaller firms.

The first definite offensive and defensive alliance between Paladini and the Western was made in December, 1908, when news came that the smaller firms were joining in the new Independent Fish Trawling Company.

Independent Concerns Start and Fail.

The independents began fishing in the following January and failed on the last day of last July. They could not stand the competition of Paladini and the Western, who used to dump fish on the market to beat down their rival's prices, while keeping up their old rates in suburban and interior shipments.

The important facts about the fight against the independents are these: Although both companies operated daily during the fight and ran the wholesale price of soles down as low as 25 cents for an 80-pound box, they began to send out their tugs on alternate days of the week after the independents failed. The price of soles jumped from 25 cents to \$4 a box also the week after competition ended.

All of the remaining firms, except one, then immediately came to an understanding with Paladini and the Western in a combination to control the market, uphold artificial prices and otherwise act in restraint of trade.

Evidence of the combination became immediately apparent. Prices among the seven combined firms became uniform. Every day truck loads of fish unsold from the previous day were taken to the glue works, of which Weissich is manager and stockholder. It is controlled by the Western's stockholders. Meantime the free market disappeared at Fishermen's Wharf.

The bay fishers are hopelessly divided by dialects scarcely understandable to others, by sectional traditions and jealousies. They are unable to unite on anything.

Being ignorant men and living on the water, they trusted a retired fisherman, who knew English and how to keep accounts, as their wharf agent. He was to set the price the dealers were to pay for the catch.

The first thing the trust did of course was to corrupt the agent. In return the agent refused to sell to independents and to buy from any fisher caught selling to independents or doing a retail business. Whatever the catch the wholesalers were assured of a 100 per cent profit at least, for the fishers had to take whatever was offered.

The retailers ceased to buy from the wharf, for to do so meant they would find their supply of soles and sand dabs cut off by the trust.

Another Independent Enterprise Went Into Business

last November and failed in January, but performed the useful service of showing further proof of conspiracy. It was started by an indignant salmon man from an up-coast bay, who found he couldn't get a decent price for his fish from the trust. He called the market the Portola, and specialized in salmon below the trust prices.

The Portola was driven out by the rawest kind of boycotting. A retailer going there for his salmon could not buy a sole from the trust. Every man blacklisted by a trust dealer was referred either to Paladini or Trapani. No effort was made to conceal the combination.

Boycotting applied not only to the Portola's customers, but against such retailers as bought halibut from Seattle, barracuda from San Diego or salmon from up the river. The trust, through its peculiar monopoly, forced the retailers to pay an arbitrary price.

The trust's defence is that the retailers make the profit. On the surface, this appears to be the case. The peddlers of the old days have passed out of existence, for the poor can buy shin-bone meat much cheaper.

The fish trade has, with increasing price, become a Friday trade, as it is eaten on that day by all good Catholics. Paladini holds onto the only steady market, which is the supplying of the restaurants.

In view of the one day's business a week, the retailers, who are not combined, look to it for their profits. While they sell often at double the wholesale price, they assume the loss through waste, such as heads, tails and entrails, and pay for its delivery. Besides they have rent and other expenses to meet.

At the time the Independent failed there were filed articles of incorporation here for a fishing company capitalized at \$2,000,000. The incorporators were the members of a law firm who have tended to the legal end of forming a number of trusts. It is known that this was to be a combination of all the big fishing companies of the coast, the Western leading. But for some reason the plan was not carried out. It is now only a paper company.

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An Anti-Trust Campaign Sure to Succeed.

The fight against the fish trust is warmly welcomed by all San Francisco, the Italian colony included. Evidence resulting in the indictments was gathered by the Call and turned over to District Attorney Fickert, who had no fund for this purpose. It is a circulation getter for the Call and good political capital for Fickert, and will be tried before a judge seeking re-election. Moreover, the anti-trust law has been upheld by the Supreme Court in the only case coming before it. As the railroads and the big corporations come under Federal interstate jurisdiction, the law will more than likely be upheld in subsequent tests. The effect is that the fish trust, with an aroused people to furnish the jury, has about as much chance as the traditional snowball.

The case against the fish trust is circumstantial, a matter in which our law, known as the Cartwright act, is extremely liberal. But the case against the vegetable trust is established by documents.

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ANOTHER FISHERY EXPERT GOING TO THE HAGUE.

Capt. Carl C. Young Will Assist Commissioners by His Experience.

Appointment Gives General Satisfaction to Fishing Interests.

The commissioners who are representing the United States before the international court at The Hague in the settlement of the disputes regarding the American fisheries dispute between the United States and Great Britain and the colonies of Canada and Newfoundland, appear to need the services of practical fishermen to aid them in the presentation of their case, and have made an urgent appeal to the state department at Washington for the appointment of another expert who is familiar by practical experience with many of the points which will arise for adjudication.

In accordance with the request of the commissioners, Congressman Augustus P. Gardner of this district, who has been in communication with representatives of the fishery interests in this city and other New England ports, after a consultation with the officials of the bureau of fisheries, has recommended the appointment of Capt. Carl C. Young of this city and the state department will accordingly appoint him to the position.

The following telegram from Congressman Gardner was received this morning by Thomas J. Carroll, president of the Gloucester Board of Trade:

"Washington, D. C., June 22, 1910.
"Thomas J. Carroll, Gloucester, Mass.
After consultation with Mr. Alexander and officials of the state department, I have decided to recom-

mend Capt. Carl Young as the practical man, in connection with commission to meet at The Hague. Capt. Young impressed the officials here very favorably last spring and they preferred him to a new man unknown to them.

"A. P. GARDNER."

Capt. Young's Selection Satisfactory.

The selection of Capt. Young is most satisfactory to many of those seen by a Times representative and who are interested in the fishing industry.

Collector of Customs William H. Jordan, when asked, said:

"The selection is an excellent one, for Capt. Young is a man of much experience."

Frank C. Pierce of the firm of the Cunningham & Thompson Company, said:

"It is a good selection, for Capt. Young is a practical man."

Hugh Parkhurst, a large vessel owner, said:

"It is all right and a good appointment."

Capt. James H. Stapleton, secretary of the Master Mariners Association, said:

"He is a good man and the proper one to send over there."

Capt. Lovett Hines, a vessel owner and a practical fisherman, said he thought the case on either side had been well prepared in advance, and he did not think whoever was sent there would in any way help the situation, for the counsel were able men on both sides, who pretty thoroughly understood the case.

HOT WEATHER AFFECTS MARKET

Decreases Shipments of Perishable Fresh Fish.

Today is another dull day at T wharf, there being only five arrivals at the dock and owing to scarcity the price of fish show an advance over yesterday. However, being so near the last of the week, it is likely that there will be no great rise in price before Monday.

The hot weather has somewhat retarded shipments of fish in a perishable state so the market does not require at present time as large a quantity as would otherwise be used if weather conditions were less extremely hot.

The vessels in today are shore crafts and their catches are light, but larger fares will doubtless be in order first of the week. There are a number of the offshore fleet about due, which are expected to have a much greater catch than those from nearer home grounds.

The receipts and prices in detail are as follows:

Boston Arrivals.

Sch. Warren M. Goodspeed, 5000 haddock, 8000 cod, 12,000 hake, 5000 cusk, Sch. Marion, 3500 cod, 1000 pollock.
Sch. Mattakesett, 8000 haddock, 14,000 cod, 12,000 hake.
Sch. Boyd and Leeds, 1500 haddock, 14,000 cod.
Sch. Rebecca, 1600 haddock, 13,000 cod.
Haddock, \$3 per cwt.; large cod, \$2.40 to \$2.50; market cod, \$1.75; large hake, \$2.25; small hake, \$1; pollock, 80c.

THREE NETTERS AT NEWPORT.

Some Seiners Reported Taken Mackerel.

The mackerel situation shows no material change from that reported yesterday, for there are no arrivals other than two netters at Newport, with a total of 2200 large fish.

The new sch. Stilletto, which went to Cape Shore, and thence south, arrived today without having taken any fish. It is reported, however, by Capt. Harty and his crew that Capt. Martin Welch in sch. Lucania, had taken 3000 mackerel on the Rips in two schools, and it is also reported that Capt. Vautier in steamer Bessie M. Dugan, had made two small hauls.

Netters at Newport.

Sch. City of Everett, 850 fresh mackerel.
Sch. Freedom, 750 fresh mackerel.
Sch. Eddie A. Minot, 750 fresh mackerel.

Irish Mackerel Fishing.

The New York Fishing Gazette's correspondent in Ireland writes from Cleggan under date of May 30, as follows: "At this station the fishing so far has been very successful. Last week 26 boats fished 8,000 down, each night. There are 500 barrels cured here ready for shipment, and about the same quantity at Aran Island and Roundstone. Curers are not anxious to sell at the low price offering; and seeing that a good demand is arising in the United States, owing to high cost of meat, surely purchasers should be able to give a price which would allow a moderate wage to fishermen and curers."

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Fishing Fleet Movements.

Sch. Esperanto arrived at Canso on Tuesday and cleared for the fishing grounds.

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GOVERNMENT SHAD FISHING.

The Work of Experts Aboard the Coast Vessel, the Fish Hawk.

Lying at anchor in the Delaware river off Gloucester, N. J., is a little vessel, painted an immaculate white, which bears across her bow the name Fish Hawk. She belongs to the United States Fish Commission. Her crew is clearing her decks for action, laying out long spawning tables and toiling away in the preparation for the millions of shad eggs which will soon come to the vessel from the fishermen up and down the river.

While the Fish Hawk has been employed in shad hatching on the Delaware many seasons since 1881, this is her first visit here in four years. She covers the entire eastern coast from the Kennebec to Key West.

The work of egg collecting is done by the crew of forty-three men, all of whom are experts. They go out to the fishing grounds in small boats towed by steam launches and there secure from the market fishermen the shad which are about to spawn. These eggs are fertilized in large pans and after several days are placed in jars in which they hatch in from four to seven days, the length of time depending on the temperature of the water. When the shad have attained the size of half an inch they are taken to the river beds and turned loose.

The Fish Hawk has collected as many as 125,000,000 eggs in a season, 80 to 95 per cent of which have proved fertile. In nature, it is said, not five per cent of the eggs hatch. The Fish Hawk has 350 hatching jars, each capable of holding 85,000 to 90,000 eggs. When the fish are hatched they find their way through a drain pipe into an aquarium, where they remain until turned out.

THEORY PROVED BY A FISH.

Salt Water Variety in Ontario Shows Origin of the Great Lakes.

Corroboration of the theory that the great lakes were originally part of the ocean, and that the elevation of the land caused their formation has been shown by the discovery in Lake Ontario, off Toronto, of a new species of sculpin.

The fish was taken in very deep water by the International Fisheries Commission, and it forms the basis of a pamphlet, entitled "Description of a New Species of Deep-water Sculpin from Lake Ontario." The pamphlet is by President David Starr Jordan and William Francis Thompson of Stanford University, California, and forms Paper 1728 in the proceedings of the United States National Museum.

Every fisherman around here knows the sculpin, that ugly, big-mouth sea scavenger, which roams the sea bottom and swallows his bait and hook. These fish are world-wide in their distribution, and the discovery of a new species in Lake Ontario means much to the geological mind. Of the new species the pamphlet says:

This specimen belongs to the Triglopsis of Pirard, the fresh water representative of the marine genus, Oncocottus, and it is presumably descended from species of the latter genus left in the great lakes on their elevation from the sea.

The paper gives descriptions of other species of deep-water fish taken in Lakes Michigan and Ontario.